

# *Cranberries*

**Duxbury Clipper**

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## **Cranberry Bog Leases Going to Bid**

Conservation Administrator Joe Grady said this week the town will soon put the management of the town's cranberry bog acreage out to bid.

Most growers say that it costs them about \$40 a barrel to grow the cranberries so many have chosen not to see another season of poor return on their crop in the current market. The town shares a negotiated percentage of the the crop return with the grower who bids for the lease.

Last year, growers faced prices of about \$35 or less and some independent growers have yet to be paid by distributors. Grady said this year's crop could bring as low as \$28 a barrel.

Problems in the cranberry industry have been attributed to a glut of cranberries and not enough market development.

The town owns 51 acres of cranberry bogs and leases the acreage to three current growers who bid for the right to cultivate the bogs and return revenue to the town.

As independents they sell to distributors including Northland, Decas Bros. and Hiller.

Chris Geldmacher grows berries at his own bogs off Temple St. and for the town at 39 acres he leases off East St. He has chosen not to continue his lease with the town, which had another year. The town also

owns 7 acres off Cherry Lane managed by Black Cat, Inc. and five acres off Church Street managed by Ronnie Pink of Red Eye Inc. The Black Cat lease expires this year and it is uncertain if the company will bid for the lease this year, Grady said.

It is not inconceivable that some local growers may re-evaluate their ability to stay in the business particularly when return on a barrel (100 pounds of berries) is half of what it cost to grow them.

Grady said he is worried about the prospects of finding growers to take on and actively cultivate the town bogs in the current market.

Cranberries have provided a nice source of income for the town in the past; like the town crematorium, an example of entrepreneurial government.